

N.K. Panda comes with diverse telecom experience in the enterprise, wireless, wireline data centre, physical connectivity and telecom infrastructure domains. Setting up a business from scratch and solving unmet challenges related to telecom infrastructure in India excite him the most. {K2Splitter}

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Having spent his formative years in a locality that lacked basic infrastructure, he was motivated to work towards creating best-in-class telecom infrastructure. According to him, inadequacy of reliable telecom infrastructure is a major bottleneck in data capacity growth in India. “It is an impediment to government initiatives such as Digital India and the Smart Cities Mission. However, this challenge can be mitigated through out-of-the-box ideas such as leveraging the existing infrastructure of utilities. I am excited to be that change agent spearheading this movement,” he says.

Panda specialises in green-field telecom ventures and currently heads the convergence business at Sterlite Power. The company aims to build a pan-India, reliable and best-in-class open fibre network by utilising power utility assets. He also serves as managing director and board member of Maharashtra Transmission Communication Infrastructure Limited, a joint venture between a Maharashtra state transco and Sterlite. His passion to explore and implement new ideas has helped organisations such as Reliance Jio, Telenor and Reliance Communications to strategise their businesses.

He feels data consumption will increase rapidly in the future, with an average Indian consuming 100 GB to 1,000 GB data per month. Technologies such as IoT, M2M, AI, 3D printing and AR/VR will fuel the transformation to a hyperconnected world.

He counts his first job at Hindustan Zinc Limited as his most memorable assignment. During this job, he was instrumental in the roll-out of a wide area network, high speed internet connectivity, enterprise mailing solutions, security solutions and the deployment of SAP. “This opportunity laid the foundation for leading in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity)

world, which has become my forte.” Panda is a computer engineer from Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, and holds an MBA from FMS Delhi. He has also completed a general management development programme from SJMSOM, IIT Mumbai.

In his spare time, he enjoys reading about telecom trends, exploring new places and spending time with old friends. His family comprises his parents, wife and their two kids.

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